

Dear The Honorable John Gleeson,

I am writing this letter to give you an insight in to who my son Mahdi Hashi is. My name is Kaltum Abdullahi Mohamud, I am 49 years old and I am Mahdi Hashi's mother. I am a care worker in London and have been living in England since 1995.

I speak to Mahdi once a month for 15 minutes most months but not every month. Our relationship is close but unfortunately restricted as we can not speak for a long time.

I believe I know my son very well, I raised him and I was very much present in his life growing up. It was I who took him to school, tuition, football matches, the park, holidays and family trips within England. I was always aware of his surroundings, his friends and his education.

It may be thought that my opinion of Mahdi is biased as I am his mother but I truly believe that Mahdi was and is an amazing individual. I found him to be more mature than his age, and this was noticed by many in our community. He was always the child trying to make peace in the playground in primary school, the one trying to make sure everyone was happy and friendly. He grew to be the one who people would come to for advice. He was kind and thoughtful. If someone around him was in pain or danger or hurt Mahdi could not watch this, he would be the helping hand. Mahdi was a person whom would put himself at risk to save another. An example of this is when Mahdi was seventeen he attended a funeral in Tottenham, North London. At this time there were two rivalry gangs; one from Tottenham and the other from Camden Town where I raised Mahdi. Mahdi was not a member of a gang but knew members from either school or the neighbourhood. Many people from Camden Town attended the funeral and members of the gang in Tottenham had heard members of their rivalry gang would be in their local area attending a funeral. They then decided this was a good chance to attack them at a funeral. While the funeral was happening they attacked their rivalry gang and one of the boys from Tottenham was carrying a knife intending to stab anyone from the Camden Town gang. The young boy who was carrying the knife brought it out intending to stab another teenager. Mahdi saw this and went to stop this crime and tragedy from happening. Mahdi put himself at risk by grabbing the boy's wrist. Then Mahdi and another young man took the knife out of his hand, and waited for the

police to arrive. Mahdi's actions could have had a greatly different outcome. It was a frightening situation but he could not stand and watch a person being stabbed.

Mahdi was my second eldest child. I had a daughter named Munira before Mahdi who died in Somalia when she was 7 months from natural causes. Mahdi was a great brother to his siblings, he would rarely be annoyed with them or argue with them. He always wanted to make sure they were happy. An example of his kindness and consideration is when Mahdi was eleven years old his father and I divorced, and in this year his younger sister my daughter Hamda (also known as Dhuh) was turning one. Mahdi was very worried about how the divorce would effect her and so he had asked me to throw a big birthday party for her although our family didn't normally throw birthday parties. Mahdi spent many weeks after my divorce thinking about how he could make his siblings feel happy and normal after the change.

My son is a great man who I am proud of, he is a generous man who respects everyone; people from all ages, ethnic groups, faiths and all walks of life. My son is an understanding person and does not rush to making judgments on people. He was a reliable and loyal young man to his friends and family. Mahdi is polite and calm and loves to make others laugh. People would never be bored around him and there would never be silence around him. My son brought light to every setting. Our neighbors and everyone who met Mahdi would like him. I believe my son still has the same qualities.

With me Mahdi is very friendly and loving. He always asked what he could help me with, whether it was grocery shopping, taking the bins out, washing the dishes or offering me a massage. I would never see my son complain, he always left and came back to the house greeting everyone with a warm smile and funny chit chat. Even when I speak to him now on the phone, it does not sound like I am speaking to someone in prison sometimes as he never likes to make me worry about him. When he started to have problems back home in Somalia Mahdi did not tell me as he was worried about how it would affect me specially as I am too far away from him, and was afraid his troubles would harm his diabetic father and I.

Mahdi was ambitious. I came to England fleeing the war in Somalia. I did not know English and had to adjust to many things. Mahdi knew this and recognised what opportunities he had in England that I never had in Somalia. My son wanted to make a difference in his life and all of ours. He desired to do well in his education and have a good career. As a huge football lover Mahdi's obvious first choice of career as a junior was to be a footballer (Soccer player). As he grew Mahdi desired to have a career working with people. He wanted to have a job that had an impact on people's lives or make a positive difference in this country. He did not desire a job that he did not find happiness in doing. Mahdi wanted to become a civil engineer and to always spend time being a youth worker too.

When Mahdi and I would talk while he was in Somalia he would sometimes say to me mum I have many funny stories for you that I can not wait to tell you when I come. Mahdi had the intentions to come back to England, the the country he grew up in and start building his future here.

I can not tell you all of Mahdi's goodness as I believe there is too many, but I can guarantee you that anyone who knew Mahdi knew all of his goodness.

As a hurting, deeply upset mother I am writing to appeal to you and your honorable courts to fulfill my request of sentencing my son justly. I ask you to please make his sentence light as he is a young man who has already been imprisoned in solidarity confinement for three years. My son is a young man whose life is still ahead of him. Mahdi is a father who is always thinking of and concerned about his wife, child and family. Mahdi is lonely and longs to see and be reunited with his wife, son, parents and siblings. This I will forever be thankful to you for, for as long as I live.

Thank you very much for your time.

Yours truly,

Kaltum A Mohamud

Dear The Honorable John Gleeson,

I am Mohamed Farah, the father of Mahdi Hashi. I am a taxi driver in London and have been living in London for 20 years.

I would like to mention a few things about who Mahdi is and what kind of person he is. Mahdi was born after his older sister passed away when she was 7 months, because of that I named my son Mahdi which means 'thanks to god', for giving me another child. From that moment I loved him and always kept him close to me.

Mahdi is very humble and a very down to earth person who is polite and listens more than he speaks. He is very kind to everyone especially the young and elderly people or whoever is vulnerable. Mahdi is the type to think of others and puts their needs first. Mahdi never gets angry and easily forgives people because of his kind heart.

Mahdi became responsible at an early age which made him care for his younger siblings. I was once angry at Mahdi's younger brother and after advising him, I asked him 'are you going to do that again?' in Somali and his brother replied 'yes' which made me even more upset, so I asked him another time, he replied 'yes' again. Mahdi then said to me 'hold on, let me ask him' he asked him the same question in English and his younger brother seemed to understand and got the message and then said 'no'.

Mahdi was always ready to reconcile and make peace between people. He was very caring and gentle. When we were moving houses, we had to carry heavy boxes and bags to the third floor with no lift, even though they were really heavy Mahdi would take all the heavy things on his own, to the extent that he injured his ankle, so I wouldn't need to carry anything. He was always very thoughtful of others and tried to make things easy for people.

When I went to go see Mahdi in Somalia, we used to travel to Mogadishu from the suburbs most of the mornings together and come back in the afternoon.

There were several times I saw Mahdi crossing the road to the other side and going over to the elderly people. I asked him why he goes to them people across the street and he told me they were elderly people

who are beggars and I am helping them by giving them what I can afford. He told me the kids are orphans who didn't have anything to eat. He was a generous person who cared about the well-being of others. I remember one time we bought drinks on the streets of Mogadishu and a woman beggar approached us and before he even had a sip of his orange juice, he gave her his drink although he was hot and thirsty. I asked him why he didn't just buy her a drink, since he was thirsty himself and he said he ran out of cash.

Mahdi lost his freedom as he is a prisoner who doesn't know how long he is facing, but hasn't lost hope and faith and I am and will always be proud of him. Given his situation he is still thinking of others, he asked me to not visit him and for me to go to visit his wife and son instead. Whenever he phones he is always asking about his parents, siblings, relatives and neighbors. He advises his siblings and always boosts their confidence and is always encouraging them to do well in education. He doesn't like to complain, instead he is always joking and laughing. When something worries him sometimes he would ask me to not tell his mother as he is concerned about worrying her.

Mahdi, my son is hopeful and has a beautiful character and is close to his god. I always pray for him and his well being. I do hope this letter does give you an insight of who Mahdi truly is.

Yours Sincerely,
Mohamed Hashi Farah (Mahdi's Father).

20/11/2015

Zakariya Hashi

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Honourable John Gleeson

United States Courthouse
225 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Dear Honourable John Gleeson,

The purpose of this letter is to introduce myself and give a character reference for Mahdi Hashi.

My name is Zakariya Hashi and I am Mahdi Hashi's younger brother. I am 19 years of age and currently working full time at a fast paced food retailer in Central London.

Mahdi has always been there for his family whenever he could be, he was a family man. Being the oldest, he would always aid his younger siblings in any type of situation. I always felt comfortable and safe around him. In the few years when I was living in Birmingham and he was here in London, he would always call whenever he finished work and was free. He'd call just to catch-up and see how I was doing which made me feel unforgotten. In his holidays he would visit us and stay as long as he could. If ever my parents, other siblings and I were to go on a holiday he would go to the airport with us and when we arrived back he would be there waiting for us at the airport. This was very comforting and the kind of warm welcoming Mahdi always gave to people.

Mahdi is a very dedicated man with very strong will power. From a young age Mahdi has always told me that I can do anything if I put my mind to it. He is the type of individual that really enjoys supporting people, giving helpful advice and passing on noble messages from his own experiences and knowledge to youths. I guess that's why he took a voluntary job as a youth worker.

My brother is a very enthusiastic and thoughtful man. He would always see where he could boost a person's happiness and energy. For instance,

my other brother Khadar was a very active and talented football (soccer) player as a kid. So when Mahdi saw this, he went out of his way to try and secure a professional team that Khadar could train with so he could improve and develop his skills further. This is just one of many examples that show Mahdi is always trying to help others achieve their dreams.

In addition to everything said above, the most known trait of Mahdi is that he is a natural comic. He always made the air a little looser which let people be themselves around him. Mahdi would often invite friends over and give them fresh food, great entertainment and a place to sleep. I can't count with my fingers the amount of times I have come home from school or somewhere and seen a friend of his in our house, smiling and enjoying themselves.

The last time I saw Mahdi was back in December 2009 when he left for Somalia. I was 13 years old.

Whilst Mahdi was in prison, he has told me that he regrets not using his time even more wisely when he was still in the UK. He says that I should not spare a second of my time, and that I should constantly read quality books and aim very high in whatever type of career I choose to enter.

Yours sincerely,
Zakariya Hashi

Dear honourable John Gleeson,

My name is Khadra Hashi. I am 16 years old and the sister of Mahdi Hashi (We share the same father). Last time I saw Mahdi was when I was 10 years old.

Growing up, Mahdi was a big part of my life, he was my older brother and my role model and I am proud to call him my older brother. Mahdi lived with me for a little while I was growing up and I can honestly say that I have nothing but good and fun memories with him. From taking me to the park, playing hide and seek with me and racing with me on my way back from school with him. I consider Mahdi to be honest, whatever he promised or said he will do, he would. He always fulfilled his promises. Mahdi was very generous in regards to his time and energy and he always strived to make other people happy. Mahdi is also a bubbly person, always smiling and laughing. I loved being around him and speaking with him.

Being the oldest in our family, Mahdi was always looking out for us and giving us sincere advice, especially when it came to educational matters. Mahdi has played a part in who I am today. He always used to make me acknowledge my rights and wrongs and always inspired me to do better, hence why he is my role model till this day. Even though he is not at present physically with me, his encouraging words has had a big impact in me and still does.

When I spoke to him on the phone 3 months ago, he told me to tell the family to tell him to call me next if I ever need to speak to him or if I needed any advice and that he will always be there for me. His words touched my heart, even with his difficult situation, he is still willing to help and to still carry on being the lovely brother he is and has always been.

I really hope you do take into consideration what I have written about Mahdi, and most importantly realise that he is a beautiful character who is loving and loved.

Yours sincerely,

Khadra Hashi

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Thursday 13th August 2015

The Right Honorable John Gleeson,
United States District Judge,
United States Courthouse
225 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, New York 11201
United States of America

Your Honour,

Re: U.S. v. Madhi Hashi 12 Cr. 661 (JG)

As a British Management Consulting Partner and senior international executive who has worked in a voluntary capacity with inner city deprived young people, community organisations and inter-faith organisations for over two decades, I am writing to you today to ask that you make a positive deliberation in the case of Mahdi Hashi by giving him a sentence as close to time served or probation as you are able to.

I have known Mahdi for over 10 years. My colleagues and I set up our inner city local youth organisation, Kentish Town Community Organisation (KTCO), over 15 years ago. It is our aim to help bring young people out of such horrors as gang and drug culture, and bring them into drug rehabilitation, help them stay in education and give them access to professional life mentors. Mahdi Hashi was one of many young people we have worked with. Unlike most he showed himself to have the capacity to help others.

Like many others I know Mahdi to be a compassionate individual who has excelled in giving selflessly. His selflessness and real compassion for others came to the fore during the youth work he undertook under our tutelage as a junior youth leader. Work he had a passion for and which he did voluntarily for many years until he went to Somalia. That he earned such responsibility demonstrated to us that this tenacious and principled young man could achieve great things.

At even such a young age he was looked at with admiration and was uncompromisingly responsible and generous with his time and limited financial resources, being amongst the first to offer help and assistance whenever it was needed. He was singlehandedly responsible for pulling out from nefarious situations many a young person - from all faiths and none - and helping them turn their lives around; away from crime, drugs and gang violence. Mahdi has always had a heart that called him to help people even if it meant risking his own life and limb.

His unfortunate harassment by our security services due to political views he held when the Ethiopians invaded Somalia in 2006, did much in our opinion to push Mahdi to feel alienated and targeted at that time and eventually to go on a journey to seek his roots. Khadra Elmi an eminent British Somali researcher with extensive experience with Somali diaspora communities in the West, including that of refugees in Yemen states in her essay on 'Somalia

and International Peace Making'¹; "Political events in Somalia in 2006, when the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) took over Mogadishu, captured the world's attention. While the international community raised its eyebrows at an Islamist movement controlling Mogadishu, many within the Somali diaspora, although wary of the ICU's religious ideology, welcomed the positive stabilising effect that the ICU brought. Reports of a cleaner, safer city and reopened ports and airports made many imagine a Somalia to which they could return. As a result, young Somalis in the diaspora, particularly young boys, saw the ICU as something positive. This was to do with the fact there were new faces in the political arena: a change from the warlords. The leaders were seen as positive role models that young people could look up to. One of the reasons that young males were so positive about the ICU is that it created the possibility of returning to a city from which they had been displaced at a young age, or to which had never been at all."

We are all well aware that the job of protecting our national security is not an easy one and can seem thankless at times, especially when things go wrong like 7/7. However, the ill thought-through use of tactics developed in the context of the cold war and our historic long time IRA threat, developed largely against highly trained subversive operatives, have had an alienating effect when used in an ill-judged way on simple young people who want to be just politically active; especially if their political views were not in line with our government's thinking or interest, as was the case in 2006 with many young British Somalis.

Unfortunately in light of the 7/7 terrorist attacks and the poor understanding of new east African immigrant communities by both our security services and our politicians, there was a rush to avoid being seen as lenient. The idea was to prevent anything from getting through any perceived cracks, which one may argue was understandable but not well thought-through. Especially in the case of how far some of those actions impinged on civil liberties and the right to freedom of association. From a strategic perspective, it was a classic case of using a sledge hammer to crack a nut and we - with many fellow citizens - were vocal in expressing this to our security services through the various channels open to us from government contacts through to law enforcement. However, in Mahdi's case, this treatment resulted in a deep-seated sense of alienation and a feeling of intense victimization which, as he told us at the time, drove him to seeking to want to spend some time with his extended family back in Somalia.

Khadra Elmi also states; "Young Somalis' understanding of their identities is shaped by their history of mobility. Both those born in the UK and those who arrived as children continue to feel the effects of the war in Somalia because it directly affects their families and the ways in which their adoptive country relates to them."

I was witness to an excellent example of his selflessness, outside a funeral being held for a young gang member who had been brutally shot to death shortly before Mahdi left the UK to visit Somalia. A young man from a rival gang decided to stab someone he had an earlier altercation with at the funeral and proceeded in the ensuing chaos to stab others as he tried to get away. Mahdi sprinted past me to tackle the attacker to the ground. I was behind him at the time as an undercover police officer identified himself to me as he stood on the bonnet of a nearby car - Mahdi prized the knife away from the attacker and gave it to the police officer. He then went on to subdue the attacker. By this time dozens of members of the rival gang decided to lynch the attacker and started repeatedly hitting the young man who was probably no more than 15 yrs old. Mahdi, who was so quick to disarm an inner city-child soldier, was now at the forefront of defending this boy from being killed; forming part of the human chain we put around him and talking down some of the rival gang members until significant Police units arrived and we were able to hand the boy to the Police. Mahdi definitely saved the lives of many people that day including that of the young attacker.

Time and again there were multiple incidents where Mahdi would put himself in harm's way to save others. Local gang members from different gangs and ethnicities respected Mahdi tremendously. He looked at his work as God's Mission for him to help people and keep them out of trouble and helping them turn their lives around satisfied him immensely. It is perhaps then a little ironic that we see him in this situation. But the people he helped along with many other young people who have heard of his case see his incarceration quite differently.

He is seen by many young people here in Britain as a victim of an unjust war targeting young people because of their faith. Regardless of the rights and wrongs of this perception, it is important that it be turned around. It is vital that young people strengthen their belief in Justice and that those that have the phenomenal potential that Mahdi has, be given the opportunity to make our society better. Any further Incarceration above and beyond what he has endured will not benefit him or society in general.

Your Honour, you are aware that when he saw the injustices and extremism of Al Shabab and what they truly represented, he decided to leave them and was imprisoned. This is an example of why Mahdi continues to have our support and maintains our strong belief that he would not knowingly harm anyone and would continue to speak out against injustice wherever he sees it.

Your Honour, to give Mahdi a chance of a future, there must be a clear recognition of his selflessness and care for others. For him to use his abilities to work with others, to help him do what he did so well in the past and I know he wants to do in the future; that is build bridges between people and help those in need. In the end as someone who has helped young and older offenders and mentored the young and not so young, I know that even a harsh sentence means he will come out some day. But surely society deserves to benefit from the positive aspects of an individual such as Mahdi who has so much to offer whilst still a young man, rather than for society to be burdened by what could become someone who goes on to have bitter resentment at a much later stage when he may have far less to offer.

Your Honour, I do not envy your position as I am sure representations are being made from both sides. If you will permit me to be so bold, I assume in these life-changing deliberations you may want clarity on two other areas;

is Mahdi a career terrorist, hell-bent on killing innocent people?

Your Honour, I can assure you this is categorically not the case. I hope you will accept that people like myself, professionals with much to lose publicly and in terms of profile association, would never have involved ourselves in defending Mahdi's character or making this plea of leniency to you had we known or suspected this for an instant. We each have had much to lose and we write to you in the knowledge that God is just and loves those that are just. For us not to stand up in this case - having known Mahdi so well - would have been an injustice first to ourselves, a choice one could not defend before God. We give this testimony in the knowledge that we will have to do the same were there any inaccuracy within it.

Is there a chance of finding Mahdi in front of you or another court again should you opt for a more lenient sentence?

Mahdi has spent some of the best years of his life awaiting trial, undergone some of the harshest of life events including only seeing his infant son grow up in pictures. He has become a cause célèbre and is known by many in Britain for the injustice of having had his citizenship taken away from him, just so he would not be called a British Citizen despite not really knowing any other stable home. Mahdi is a man who has had a long time to think about water that has passed under the bridge and I am certain that he will categorically not pose any

threat. What he does own is a heart predisposed against injustice. At 25 this young man has his whole life ahead of him. Having stayed in touch closely with his family through this ordeal I can say he is a man who has reflected fully on life's events, the good and the bad, and has spent an inordinate amount of time deconstructing the past to equip himself to deal with a future that will bring positive change.

Your Honour, I call on you to embrace the higher law for which justice was meant to serve. There is no value left in incarcerating for any serious length of time a man who has done his time, even if he has not been judged formally till now. If it is a deterrent you seek then I ask you also take into consideration the young man on whom you inflict that and take his character reference from those that society has been kind enough to hold in respect. Many thousands of young people in Britain are, once again, closely looking to the judgment of a US court.

A judgment that embraces mercy and understanding will go a long way to reconcile the deep-seated hurt as a result of global conflicts - irrespective of the rights and wrongs – which, however much we wish to ignore their influence, have had a divisive impact on social cohesion and international relations in both of our countries.

We believe in a world that is a true brotherhood of nations for it is only this that will ensure a future that brings peace. To that end, there must be healing; this case and your ruling can make a significant positive contribution. "Blessed are they who maintain justice, who constantly do what is right ", the Bible teaches us in Psalms and it was your founding father George Washington who said "Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all." We have sought to say and do what is right, and we ask you to look deeply into your heart and mind to do the same.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Sharhabeel Lone
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1. <http://www.c-r.org/accord-article/distant-voices-and-ties-bind-identity-politics-and-somali-diaspora-youth#sthash.uOPfEe2j.dpuf>